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SOME HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

BY JAMES THOMSON.

O to glue two pieces of wood together that they adhere and become as one, will, at first thought, seem an act so simple as to render any suggestion as to the proper method of procedure unnecessary. And yet simple as it seems, and in reality is, the number of persons at all conversant with its proper accomplishment are indeed very limited. Of course we here refer to unprofessional people, although we might very properly, without doing an injustice, include many professionals among the number.

During the past few years there have been written many dissertations condemnatory of the use of glue in the construction of furniture, inspired mainly by those who, while well intentioned, have been satisfied to gain their knowledge on the subject second hand, or at best from theoretical rather than practical sources.

Glue in its place, and with proper usage, has its value; it is not the use of, but rather the abuse of it, that is to be condemned. The joint that is strong enough in itself without the glue can surely lose nothing in stability by its addition.

It has been often remarked by workers of wood that in many instances when two pieces of wood have been joined by glue, and sundered again, the fracture would be found in a fresh place, giving evidence of the fact that a glue joint can be made to be as strong as the original perfect piece.

Within the province of the household glue will be found a valuable auxiliary. The best regulated family must sometime confess to the possession of a piece of furniture requiring its useful offices. The armless chair, the legless table, the broken and humiliated remnants of once useful and pretentious household furnishings, are familiar objects in many a home, yet these may come within the pale of possible redemption and renew the promise of continued usefulness.

It has been remarked that where home efforts have been made at *refraining*, in very many cases they seem to have been conducted on the theory that the more glue used the stronger the joint would be, but the reverse would be nearer the truth; the less used the better, providing all the parts of the surfaces to be joined are covered. It will not be necessary at this time to enlarge on the subject by any elaborate explanation of the reason for this; it is sufficient for our present purpose to know that it is a fact.

Before applying the glue heat the pieces you desire to join, then when glued bring and hold together in position with a handscrew, or in the absence of this useful article, bind up with cord or rope until the joint is thoroughly hardened, when the restraint may be removed and all superfluous glue scraped off. In addition to this, where possible, it would well to further make the work secure by the addition of a nail, being careful not to split the wood in the operation. Every description of gluing should be done in the same manner. The wood should previously be warmed, not too much however, because if scorched, the life of the glue will be destroyed or at least the power of adhesion be impaired.

But when all is said, there is something of greater importance as a factor of success than any mechanical manipulation, and that is the quality and condition of the glue. In all well regulated furniture establishments the utmost care is exercised in keeping it sweet and clean; when old and decayed, glue becomes absolutely worthless for purposes of adhesion. It can therefore readily be seen that to ensure satisfactory results such precautions as we have pointed out are alike binding on amateur and professional.

Let it be constantly borne in mind also that as much of the glue as possible should be pressed out of the joint, otherwise it will not hold for any length of time. For the reason that the Japanese do not take this fact into consideration it will be found that their wood work crumbles to pieces when submitted to the test of our climate. The joints seemingly are made by little pats of glue or cement, requiring only the slightest blow to separate them. One or two months of our variable temperature is generally sufficient to render the work of disintegration complete, enough at least to satisfy our Oriental artisan that his method of gluing will bear revising.

It will sometimes happen that one wishes to polish some little article such as a bracket, frame, etc., and does not very well know how to go

about it; of course almost every one knows that shellac or varnish should be used, but how applied and how made is the question to be met.

Some time ago we read an inquiry in the "Notes and Queries" department of the *Boston Transcript*, for information as to the method to be adopted in polishing a spinning wheel. There are many such inquiries, and the answers are oftentimes as unsatisfactory and misleading as the reply in this particular instance, which if we remember rightly was to the following effect:

"Give a coat of shellac, and after sandpapering apply additional coats of shellac *even up to as many as seven coats.*" The further inquiry was made as to whether or not the sandpapering should be given between every coat of shellac, but as far as we could observe there was no answer to this.

Presuming one wishes to polish a spinning wheel or any article of woodwork, apply one coat of shellac evenly with a brush, let stand until dry, which will be in about five hours, then with No. 0 sandpaper rub the surface lightly and apply another coat of shellac. If the article is of oak, ash, cherry, or black walnut, three coats of shellac will be sufficient. It is not necessary to use the sandpaper between each coating, but it tends to make smoother work in the end, filling up the grain better.

It should be remembered in applying the varnish that the more you put on the more difficult it will be to get the crevices smooth when you come to the next process, which is technically known as rubbing, and is done in the following manner: Having already filled the grain of the wood with shellac you next proceed to rub it smooth and of an even surface. Take a piece of hair cloth about three inches square, fold it once in the middle, dip this in raw linseed oil, and on it put some finely powdered pumice stone. With this proceed to rub the surface smooth, being careful not to bear too hard, or you may rub through entirely. After this is completed clean off the oil, using benzine for the purpose, wiping dry with a cloth used vigorously.

When the article is of cherry ebonised, or of mahogany, it may be necessary to give a greater number of coats, mahogany particularly requiring from four to six to make a satisfactory finish. Should one wish to stain the wood it can be done very easily. A good mahogany color can be had by dissolving maroon lake in water, adding a piece of potash about as large as a walnut to a quart of water, plenty of the color. This will give a good mahogany imitation on any wood and can be used to darken the mahogany if so desired.

Oak or ash may be stained brown by using linseed oil and benzine half and half, and burnt umber or Vandyke brown incorporated with this. Maple can be stained green-gray by using copperas in water, oak will also be changed to a dark green blue through the same agency, the effect on ash being various shades of olive green. Ammonia applied to oak produces the bronze olive tint now used so much by architects.

Staining by the fumes of ammonia results in all shades from light olive to the rich deep brown of extreme age. This method is considered the best for imparting to oak or mahogany the appearance of age, and for those wishing to avail themselves of an easy, clean, and certain means of gaining the result, fumigating offers no serious obstacle to its accomplishment, the articles necessary being easy of acquirement and at small expense.

Procure for your use a box sufficiently large to receive the article, any well made packing box will be suitable providing the joints or seams are close. Next get some strong *full strength* liquid ammonia, not the diluted article of the druggist, pour some in a shallow receptacle, such for instance as a deep plate, place this in the bottom of the box so that the fumes will *rise* and surround the object to be stained, close the box securely so that the fumes will be confined as much as possible. When the article is small of course the box need not be large, the smaller the better, for then you will not require so much ammonia. You can see how the staining progresses by wetting a portion from time to time, otherwise the change of color would not be perceptible. All that is now necessary is to leave the ammonia to do the work, remembering that the longer the exposure the darker the hue will be.

ART has decidedly reached the kitchen department. New styles of ranges out for the fall season show above the fire plates central ornamented panel at back, with side wings from which springs opened pierced work supporting a shelf finished off with decorative entablature of geometric patterns, pierced so as to take away all heaviness. Leaf, berry, and flower designs are properly conventionalized.

ARTISTIC FIRE SCREENS.

BURNISHED brass divides the honors with oak, mahogany, maple, ash, and other cabinet woods for fire screens, shapes, etc. Outside frames and geometrical interior divisions, where introduced, have much to do with the effect. A dark wood sets off well bright tints in translucent glass or opaque enamels, the latter together with bulls eyes now much resorted to for bordering central decorations in mosaic stained glass, which has an unfailingly cheerful appearance.

Pictorial designs in this glass are less sought after than choice combinations of simple tints. Excellent paintings in glass are also displayed, the glass being in sheets and unbroken by leading.

There are screens, square, oval, and oblong, entirely of metal, the frames being filled in with fine woven wire with center ornamental figures embossed. Fan-shaped screens, with reticulated metal work of burnished brass and extremely handsome, are mounted on the inside portion of fenders.

A curious Japanese screen has been imported, suggestive of a new style of decoration, and which is to be suspended in hammered form. It consists of a series of natural colored reeds in lake colors in pieces some two inches long strung in perpendicular lines by bright blue silk cords which enter the portion that had been filled with pith, amber beads in the lower section being strung on this silk cording at the joints. Above, and displaying themselves on the surface of the longitudinal rows, is a fanciful design carried out with brilliant colored glass and enameled beads strung on the reeds themselves, and which have a mosaic-like effect. The least stirring of the screen by hand or draught, or changes of light from the fire when it faces the fire at an angle, varies the effect in fresh scintillations.

This style of screen might be manufactured here, for suitable reeds are obtainable in abundance. The designs seen in Italian mosaic work would be suitable. The screen might be appropriately finished off with a silk fringe or string of beads alternating in color. Reeds are ready absorbers of color and so could be stained any hue.

We would suggest this as a charming occupation for ladies. The screens, when completed, should be hung on cross pieces attached to standards of twisted brass. Except as to novelty, however, it must be admitted that the product of the needle in embroidery is far more charming.

ON inspecting the many hundred paintings previous to public sale of the collection of a late wealthy resident of New Jersey with a high repute for taste, and who abjured all mediocre productions, we were surprised to find not a single interior or object of art depicted. All the scenes were from nature, and, though charming in themselves, the absence of any delineation of the constructive or artistic order, struck us as indicating a mental deficiency of culture for the forms and hues of nature as embodied in art, rank higher than nature herself, and, to use an old term of alchymy, indicate a higher transmutation.

REGILDING FRAMES.—Wash the frame well with sponge and water. Procure water gold size and mix with it sufficient thin size made from parchment and in a warm state, sufficient to enable you to work on the frame with a camel's hair brush. Give it two coats, rest it on its edge to drain, and sandpaper it when dry. Apply the gilding and then go over it with a pencil dipped in water which will take off the leaf that does not adhere. Place bits of leaf with a dry pencil on parts not covered, then give the whole a coat of clear parchment size. Brush the back edges over with ochre and the frame is ready.

DYED flowers may be put to use for various ornamental purposes. For color various kinds of aniline are used, the aniline being dissolved in alcohol. Pour some boiling water into a porcelain vessel and add as much dissolved aniline as will nicely color the water. When the water has cooled a little the flowers are immersed, and after rinsing hung up to dry in the open air. For a fine blue aniline, *bleu de lait* is boiled with the water for five minutes and a few drops of sulphuric acid added before using.

THERE are some costly mantels in the market designated as of the mediaeval style, which exhibit merely tasteless conglomerations of metals and tiles.